

Assist Demand Driven Livelihoods and Employment in Markets with High Returnees (ADDL) & Emergency Assistance to Conflict Affected Populations (ECAP)

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Unity State and Abyei Administrative Area, South Sudan

Final Program Results Report

Reporting Period: June 2011 to December 31, 2013

Country Contact	Headquarters Contact
Mathieu Rouquette Country Director Tompung Juba, South Sudan Phone: + 211 912724445 mrrouquette@ss.mercycorpg.org	Steven Zodrow Senior Program Officer 45 SW Ankeny Street Portland, Oregon 97204, Phone / Fax: (503) 896-5729 /896-5011 szodrow@mercy Corps.org
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Mercy Corps staff supervising a CFW project at Dol local Bridge in Unity State July 2013

Overview of Implementation Period:

The implementation period of the program coincided with major events among households in Unity State and Abyei Administrative Area (AAA). In AAA, the May 2011 attack by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) caused mass displacement of nearly 120,000 people (roughly 75% of the population) to neighboring Wau, Warrap State, Agok, and Northern Bahr El Ghazal regions. At the launch of the program in June 2011, Unity State was registering the highest influx of returnees within South Sudan (79,846 individuals). Most of these returnees were coming in without any support or inputs to earn a living. Markets lacked most of the required items and there were limited jobs for returnees. Given the timing, the initial activities implemented during the program were crucial to jump start trader and farming activities. Traders supported were able to bring items into the market and food security was enhanced through vegetable growing. Goods were affordable for consumers in the market and the market was vibrant. With road access in the dry season, more goods were restocked. However during the rainy season trade routes were cut off restricting traders to either move items from Juba by the river or to rely on warehouse stock.

In April 2012, there was fighting between Sudan and South Sudan which resulted in displacement of returnees into IDP camps. The fighting coincided with the period in the seasonal calendar when households had to start land preparation for staple crops. This resulted in less involvement in agriculture and more reliance on the market for food. The few households that managed to cultivate were affected by the floods of 2012. Therefore the program helped to provide temporary employment to vulnerable households, improving their purchasing power to have a robust food basket of food and non-food items from the market. Furthermore the program provided seeds and tools to such households to enable them to engage in productive agriculture in the planting season of 2013. Moreover, extremely vulnerable households continued to be supported with monthly cash transfers to buffer the consumption shock and a robust food basket.

With the referendum in October 2013, there was a large influx of Dinka Ngok returnees into AAA, the host community itself is primarily comprised of IDPs, and overwhelmingly relies on humanitarian support. Given the high levels of political mobilization and the number of returnees there was huge humanitarian support to enable both IDPs, returnees and host cope with this influx. The assistance through the program was timely enabling beneficiaries to obtain tools and seeds while others were employed in cash for work activities.

The recent fighting that began in December 2013, between government and opposition forces in South Sudan, has resulted in widespread death and destruction of towns, villages and markets, the internal displacement of 575,500 people, and 112,200 people seeking refuge in neighboring countries. In Unity State, fighting between government and opposition forces has displaced an estimated 115,000 people. Over the last several weeks, insecurity in Mayom, Rubkona and other counties has driven the populations southwards to Koch and Leer counties (in Unity State), and to neighboring Warrap State and the AAA. In Leer County alone, there has been an influx of 10,000 IDPs, and 6,300 in Koch respectively. Recent IOM reports indicate that Twic County (Warrap State) currently hosts 12,195 IDPs from Unity state, while the AAA has received close to 2,600 IDPs from Abiemnom County.

Sector 1: Agriculture and Food Systems

Objective One: Conflict affected and vulnerable populations re-enter a productive agricultural food cycle through field crop production.

	Unit of Measure	Cumulative Period Targeted	Cumulative Period Reached
Number of Beneficiaries Targeted	Individuals	48,766	56,420
Number of IDP Beneficiaries Targeted (subset of above)	Individuals	20,843	20,525

Sub-sector 1.1: Improving Agricultural Production/Food Security

AID-DFD-G-11-00119 Cost Mod 02 (ECAP)

Activity 1.1.1: Beneficiary selection, registration and data collection

Beneficiary identification was done in three stages, all consistent with the grant award in 2011, with subsequent modification in 2012 and 2013. Village committees, local administration, line ministries and stakeholders in food security and livelihoods were part of this process.

Activity 1.1.2: Identification of agro-dealers to participate in seeds / tools voucher

Mercy Corps' implementation team identified vendors for local seeds and tools during seed fairs. In Unity State four farmers unions and 6 blacksmiths were selected to participate in the fair while in AAA, 10 craftsmen and 34 traders were selected and MOUs were signed. Mercy Corps worked with these dealers to host seed and tool fairs as detailed in the next activity.

Activity 1.1.3: Individual beneficiaries access seeds and tools through vouchers and links to traders in local markets

In both Unity and AAA, seed fairs were organized in central locations for beneficiaries to obtain seeds and tools. In AAA, 3,000 households each received one *malwa* (3.5kg) of sorghum seeds, one *malwa* of groundnut seeds, and one *maloda* (hoe). In Unity State, 2,802 households received a *malwa* of either sorghum or maize depending on preference and assorted tools including *maloda*, *panga* (machete), sickle, and *maloda*. A total of 5,802 households in Unity and AAA benefited from seed and tools using a voucher system.

Activity 1.1.4: Technical training for lead farmers

To empower farmers with agronomic skills for better crop husbandry, lead farmers were trained in theoretical and practical trainings in land preparation, weed and pest control, post-harvest handling and storage. A total of 227 farmers were trained (AAA: 100; Unity: 127). These farmers too are reaching out to their counterparts, training and guiding them in agronomy. It was envisioned that as farmer to farmer trainings progress, they will have a multiplier effect and a significant number of farmers will be trained as the knowledge trickles down.

Activity 1.2: Fifteen cash grants used by producer groups for seeds/tools/irrigation equipment

Mercy Corps supported different farming groups in Unity State for dry season production. Initially 17 groups were each provided with SSP 5000 (USD \$1,560) for procurement of irrigation equipment, wires, seeds and tillage tools, among others. Mercy Corps selected four groups for a second round of funding of SSP 8,400 each using the remaining funds available.

Sector 2: Economic Recovery and Market Systems

Objective Two:

Conflict affected and vulnerable populations increase their purchasing power and meet household and livelihood needs through markets.

	Unit of Measure	Cumulative Period Targeted	Cumulative Period Reached
Number of Beneficiaries Targeted	Individuals	49,440	52,701
Number of IDPs Targeted (subset of above)	Individuals	17,682	19,381

Market Infrastructure Rehabilitation

AID-DFD-G-11-00119 Cost Mod 02 (ECAP)

Activity 2.1.1: Beneficiary identification in Rubkona and Leer to receive cash assistance

(See Activity 2.1.3)

Activity 2.1.2: Eight 2-day modules for 50 people on ‘Start and Improve Your Own Business’

Before the first modification to this grant, Mercy Corps conducted 4-day SIYB training benefiting 18 traders. After that first modification, two 2-day training sessions were conducted in Rubkona and Leer counties in Unity State targeting a total of 56 traders covering the following topics: marketing, stock control, procurement procedures, recording operating expenses, business planning, people and productivity as well as pricing and costing. Through these trainings traders who received cash grants were equipped with skills on how to use the money received as detailed under activity 2.1.3. A total of 74 traders were trained on how to improve their businesses.

Activity 2.1.3: 15 traders receive cash grants for bulk procurement

Mercy Corps provided business grants to 15 traders for bulk procurement which was provided in two installments of SSP 4500 (USD \$1400) for each trader. This amount constituted the co-financing component towards procurement of additional inputs and/or operating expenses (e.g. rent, transport). The second installment was subject to verification of adequately having used the first installment before receiving the last payment. In total, each business owner received a total of SSP 9,000 (USD \$2,813) for bulk procurement.

Sub-sector 2.2: Microcredit

Activity 2.2.1: Mobilize the formation of VSLA groups in Unity and AAA

A total of 120 VSLA groups in Unity State were formed and mobilized. Similarly in AAA, 23 groups were trained and mobilized. These were comprised of a majority of women that engaged in different small income generating activities, including petty trading and tea selling. The membership across these groups was 3,172 members including 1,839 females and 1,333 males.

Activity 2.2.2: Provide an initial 3-day training per group and VSLA materials

All groups that had been formed were provided with 3-day trainings before the commencement of VSLA activities. As part of the training exercise, group members drafted their constitutions, elected their leaders (Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary) and agreed on the share value, loaning dynamics in relation to share capital, repayment, and social fund. Mercy Corps then provided all groups with VSLA materials (passbooks, cashbox and locks), before they started saving.

Activity 2.2.3: Data collection and follow up

Data collection is an ongoing exercise streamlined across VSLAs. During visits to the groups, Mercy Corps staff helped groups iron out some group dynamic issues that had cropped up and helped oversee the share-outs exercise. Mercy Corps monitored group savings and loans on a weekly basis and provided refresher trainings and/or support to VSLA groups on an ongoing basis.

Over the period of 2 years, some groups have shared out savings while others have started new cycles. During the program’s life of this activity, a total of 1,964 members received loans and repaid back while the total amount of money mobilized through these VSLA groups was USD \$119,484. The average interest earned on the share capital across these groups was 19%.

Sub-sector 2.3: Temporary Employment (Cash for Work)

Activity 2.3.2: Cash Transfer for 1375 most vulnerable households

In Unity State, 899 households have received monthly cash transfers totaling to SSP 700 (USD \$218) per household during the project life. Hence a total of SSP 629,300 (USD \$196,656) was channeled into vulnerable beneficiaries in Unity while in AAA 500 households received a total of SSP 320,000 (USD

\$100,000). Hence, a total of 1,399 households received SSP 949,300 (USD \$296,656) under this activity, which helped these households obtain food and non-food items at the peak of the hunger gap.

Activity 2.3.3: 1750 households participate in 22 cash for work (CFW) projects

In Unity State, 1607 households received temporary employment to implement 22 CFW projects while in AAA, 5 CFW projects were implemented benefiting 500 households. Throughout the life of the project, a total of 2,107 households have benefited from 27 CFW projects with a total of SSP 753,337 (USD \$235,418) being channeled into the communities.

Activity 2.3: Enable skills development for youth returnees through apprenticeships in host community enterprises

Through an open application process, Mercy Corps identified and selected 40 apprentices for computer literacy following a verification of their educational qualifications and 20 apprentices for the driving and mechanic course with a priority for women. These were attached to private firm who agreed to provide 50 minutes per day of driver training including basic mechanics to the apprentices. For ICT, the training was conducted in two batches at Bentiu Technical School (a registered computer training school) with eight modules spread over an eight week period.